

REMARKS

In the May 12, 2005 Office action, the Examiner has indicated that previously pending claims 12, 15-17, 22, and 28-30 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including the elements of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants have rewritten claims 12, 15-17, 22, and 28-30 in independent format as suggested. Applicants have also amended claims to correct dependency and added dependent claims to some of the independent claims. The amendment, cancellation, and/or addition of claims is not to be considered in any way an indication of applicants' position on the merits of the amended, cancelled, and/or added claims. Applicants have made these amendments for the purpose of furthering prosecution, but reserve the right to file continuation applications. Based on these amendments, applicants respectfully submit that pending claims are now in condition for allowance.

Although claim 28 was not specified as having allowable subject matter in the Detailed Action, it was not specifically rejected in the Detailed Action. Further, claim 28 was shown as being objected to in the Office Action Summary. Finally, claim 28 specifies that "male coupling members and said female coupling members have a substantially semi-circular shape." This subject matter was indicated as allowable in other claims (e.g. claims 12 and 17). Accordingly, applicants have assumed that the failure to indicate claim 28 as having allowable subject matter in the Detailed Action is a mistake and have treated it as such.

In view of the above, it is submitted that the currently pending claims are patentable. Accordingly, the Examiner is requested to reexamine the application, to allow the claims, and to pass the application on promptly to issue.

Application No. 10/677,840
Amendment dated August 8, 2005
Reply to Office action of May 12, 2005

Please charge Deposit Account No. 50-2115 for any additional fees that may be required.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Karen Oster", is written over a horizontal line.

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